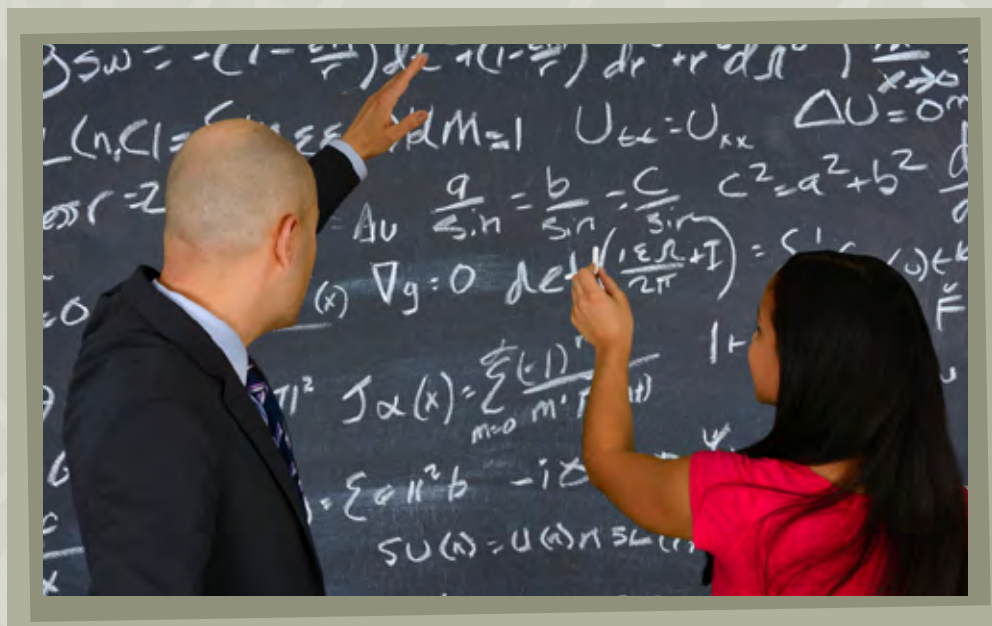UTAH

STATE SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SSIP)

June 2015

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****USBA Advisory Representative Appointment   *****State Charter School Board Representative Appointment

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Introduction

This document represents Utah's Phase I plan for the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), and describes the state system and its capacity to assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. These improvement efforts align with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The success of the SSIP requires systematic improvement across the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) and LEAs to leverage existing strengths while simultaneously closing system gaps. For this to occur, the USOE and LEAs must:

► Increase capacity to implement the SSIP, utilize available technical assistance (TA) resources, and implement general supervision systems that support effective implementation of the IDEA and ESEA;

► Increase utilization of evidence-based practices;

► Improve infrastructure and coordination for delivering effective professional development (PD) and TA;

► Increase the use of effective dissemination strategies; and

► Increase meaningful engagement of state and local stakeholders around SSIP efforts.

These combined improvement efforts, chronicled in the SSIP, will lead to improved educational outcomes for all students in the area of mathematics proficiency, which in turn will also improve state results in graduation, dropout, and post-school outcomes.

Executive Summary

Utah's 2013–2014 Student Assessment of Growth and Excellence (SAGE) tests show 42.2% of students without disabilities in grades three through eight and ten were proficient in mathematics, but just 12.9% of students with disabilities were proficient: a 29.3% achievement gap.

To address this achievement gap, the USOE brought together a variety of education and community stakeholders to create the FFY 2013 SSIP Phase I. USOE held multiple in-person and online meetings with these groups to review and analyze state and LEA data as well as the USOE infrastructure, and determine the area of greatest need for immediate improvement for students with disabilities outcomes. *Part of the review process identified the need to recruit and ensure the involvement of general education teachers (at the USOE and in LEAs) and members of the business community, groups who have historically had little role in providing input regarding students with disabilities, despite the fact that virtually all Utah's students with disabilities access the general education classroom and local businesses.*

Stakeholders reached consensus on Utah's State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR). The goal is to increase statewide proficiency by 11.11% for students with Speech Language Impairments (SLI) or Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) in grades six through eight on SAGE mathematics over a five-year period. In order to improve achievement in mathematics, stakeholders identified three primary areas for USOE and LEAs to focus their efforts:

1 Administrator, teacher, parent, and student attitudes and behavior (resulting in some Individualized Education Program [IEP] team decisions that limit grade-level core mathematics instruction);

2 Teacher understanding of mathematics standards and effective instruction; and

3 An educational system that decreases general education instructional support and interventions in secondary settings, during a time when the mathematics core standards become more rigorous and abstract (i.e., Multi-Tiered System of Supports [MTSS]).

Figure 1: Root Cause Concerns
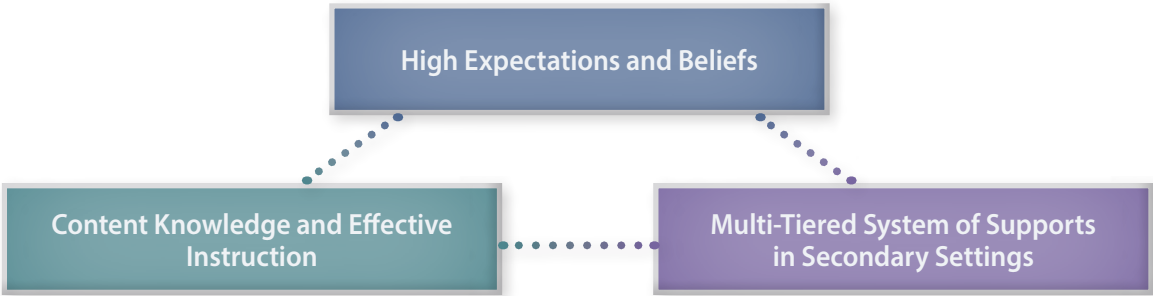
Across the three root causes identified by Utah stakeholders, there are common themes which, when aligned, addressed, and supported through Utah's selected improvement strategies, will result in correcting the identified root causes and ensure achievement of Utah's SiMR. Those themes include:

► Creating a learning environment that is supportive of leadership, partnerships, and collaboration to meet changing national, state, and local requirements;

► Basing IEP team decisions on individualized student needs with the provision of special education and related services to support achievement in the Utah Core Standards in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE);

► Providing both preservice and inservice professional learning to ensure all Utah teachers possess adequate Utah Core Standards content and pedagogy skills to meet the needs of all students;

► Engaging all school personnel to support educators, students, and families during the transition;

► Grounding educational and instructional decisions in data and use of evidence-based instructional practices; and

► Funding at the federal, state, and local levels to sustain effective practices.

The impact of the coherent improvement strategies, based upon the root causes and common themes, will result in three vital changes leading to increased student proficiency:

1 Administrators, teachers, parents, and students will see the need to expect students with disabilities to master mathematics content (resulting in IEP team decisions that require and scaffold grade-appropriate Core mathematics instruction);

2 General education and special education teachers will understand mathematics standards and effective instruction will improve; and

3 The state and LEAs will increase general education instructional support and interventions in secondary settings, to scaffold mathematics Core standards as they become more rigorous and abstract.

Figure 2: Root Cause Concerns/Broad Coherent Improvement Strategies

High Expectations and Beliefs

Inclusion in grade level core content, assessment, graduation requirements, and College and Career Ready Plans.

Leadership | IEP Team Decisions | Partnerships and Collaboration | Pre-service and In-service Professional Learning | Active Engagement of all School Personnel | Data Driven Decision Making | Evidence-Based Practices | Fiscal Support

Math content and pedagogy to provide effective instruction through Universal Design for Learning and evidence-based interventions.

Infrastructure, Scale, Fidelity.

Content Knowledge and Effective Instruction

Multi-Tiered System of Supports in Secondary Settings

In addition to the SSIP-specific improvement strategies, Utah has many infrastructure strengths to further support these improvement efforts, especially regarding professional learning, accountability and monitoring, data availability and usage, and a statewide MTSS. Utah is participating in a variety of state-level initiatives that will be incorporated and leveraged within this SSIP, especially regarding existing improvement efforts included in the Utah Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Waiver, the Utah Excellence (Equity) Plan, the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) Center Intensive Technical Assistance, and Governor Herbert's PACE (Prepare young learners, Access for all students, Complete certificates and degrees, Economic success) initiative. These strengths will be used to implement, scale up, and sustain the use of evidence-based practices in Utah's SiMR, while areas needing improvement will also be addressed to reduce the impact of the gap.

Initially, nine LEAs across Utah have been selected to participate in the SSIP. Scaling up plans will adjust each year for the next five years to ensure that the SSIP is broad enough, and effective enough, to build the capacity of all Utah LEAs to systematically increase the mathematics proficiency of students with disabilities in grades six through eight.

This document is a shortened version of the complete report, which may be downloaded at: *http://www.schools.utah.gov/sars/ data/performance/reports/2013ssip.aspx*

Stakeholder Involvement and Engagement in the SSIP

The USOE Leadership Team (Superintendent and Associate Superintendent, Special Education Director, and Coordinators) guided the review of data, data analysis, and development of the SSIP, which included multiple internal and external in-person and written discussions of data, infrastructure gaps, areas of strength and areas needing improvement, and possible improvement strategies. These discussions and analyses occurred with a wide selection of stakeholders at numerous state meetings and statewide conferences during the last year, including:

▶ Utah State Board of Education (USBE);

▶ Utah State Charter School Board (USCSB);

▶ USOE staff across departments (e.g., Special Education, Title I, Teaching and Learning, Career Technical Adult Education (CTAE), Assessment, and Data and Statistics);

▶ Utah Special Education Advisory Council (USEAP) (list of all USEAP membership and roles is located at http://www. schools.utah.gov/sars/Partnerships/USEAP.aspx);

▶ Local Education Agency (LEA) staff;

▶ Utah Professional Development Network (UPDN) providers and Advisory Board;

▶ Utah Parent Center (Utah's Parent Training and Information Center [PTI]);

▶ Utah Parent Teacher Association (PTA);

▶ Utah Assessment Policy Advisory Committee (PAC);

▶ Utah Coordinating Council for People with Disabilities (CCPD) (members from Utah state agencies, including Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Health, Division of Services to Persons with Disabilities, PTI, and Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind);

▶ Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) teacher preparation, leadership, and math departments;

▶ Educators (general education and special education teachers);

▶ Parents;

▶ Paraeducators;

▶ Advocates (from Utah's Protection and Advocacy [P&A] and the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities [LCPD]); and

▶ Community members (included in various committees, Boards, and statewide conferences).

These stakeholders were included because they either pay for, provide, receive, participate in, or collaborate on IDEA services and issues, and/or provide expertise. Utah's stakeholders are vital to the success of the SiMR, and their efforts are valued and integral to the SSIP Phase I, as is their ongoing commitment to continue working towards improving outcomes for students with disabilities during subsequent phases.

Historical Stakeholder Involvement Process and Need to Broaden Representation

The USOE has historically involved a variety of stakeholders in all education-related discussions and decision making. As part of the development of this SSIP, USOE staff engaged in an infrastructure analysis which included a review of the USOE structure and capacity across departments to roll out, implement, scale up, and sustain initiatives. This analysis identified that a broader stakeholder group, including general educators and community members, is needed. Many of the identified improvement needs impact the greater educational and business community, rather than only affecting students with disabilities. Also, stakeholders outside of special education have traditionally deferred providing input to individuals they perceive as having special knowledge and expertise regarding students with disabilities, rather than considering how the needs of all students align with and support the needs of students with disabilities who access Tier I Core instruction in addition to their specialized instruction *(Shapiro, 2014)*. *These stakeholder behaviors unintentionally contributed to the current state of wide-spread separate and reduced expectations for students with disabilities in comparison with non-disabled peers in Utah, especially in regards to IEP team decisions concerning the supports needed for students with disabilities to access and progress in the grade-level state mathematics standards.*

The USOE recognized the need for moving beyond simply informing a limited group of stakeholders through public channels, consulting/gathering input, and reaching decisions, to creating opportunities for authentic and direct interaction, building consensus, and sharing leadership opportunities with the full range of education and community stakeholders to implement practical and sustainable solutions *(Rhim, 2014)*. The Collaboration Continuum *(Zorich, 2008)* was used by USOE staff to attain consensus in setting USOE-wide targets for "collaboration" improvement for the next year, moving the USOE staff from "contact" to "coordination" by September 11, 2015.

Although these collaboration efforts, needs, and goals were determined by front-line USOE staff, they are supported by USOE Leadership and LEAs, who recognize the need for changing communication and collaboration protocols at all levels to effectively change and sustain educational practices throughout the state.

Stakeholder Consensus on Contributing Factors to Current Student Outcomes

Stakeholders, when reviewing mathematics proficiency data as well as demographic and placement data, disaggregated at the state and local levels (i.e., gender, age/grade, race/ethnicity, English Learner [EL], socio-economic, and disability category), generally agreed that when students with disabilities are held to high expectations *(Frieden, 2004) and have access to and receive effective Tier I instruction and support in the Core standards alongside their same-age peers, supported by specialized instruction and related services and other Tier II–III interventions, they can achieve high academic standards.* Those same stakeholders attributed Utah's low levels of proficiency to a variety of contributing factors and potential root causes, including:

Figure 3: The Collaboration Continuum

THE COLLABORATION CONTINUUM

Collaboration refers to a process in which two or more groups work together toward a common goal by sharing expertise, information, and resources. The continuum represents a range in the level of possible collaboration and defines where respective collaborative activities have occurred along this process. Points along the continuum mark shifts in the collaborative process as activities become more complex until convergence is attained.

Contact	Cooperation	Coordination	Collaboration	Convergence
Shared Ideas & Information	**Shared Goals**	**Shared Achievement of Goals**	**Shared Resources**	**Synthetic Infrastructure**
Open, honest dialogue encourages the exploration of commonalities and the development of relationships to facilitate discussion of potential activities.	Relationship building fosters the development of cooperative activities. Because this is a process, it often begins with informal engagements that offer small, yet tangible benefits. It sometimes occurs only one way. **For example:** Information or data sharing.	Cooperative activities move beyond "as needed" or "ad hoc". A framework organizes efforts and ensures that everyone in the group understands who does what, when and where. The activities are planned with consideration given to schedules and staff availability. Communication tools may be developed to support coordination efforts. Relies on formal or informal agreements to achieve a desired common outcome.	Information is not only shared, but something new is created. It is a new way of doing things the involves change. The change required is more ambitious than cooperation and coordination and much more difficult to develop and sustain.	Collaboration around a specific function or idea has become so extensive, engrained, and assumed that it is no longer recognized by others as a collaborative undertaking; instead it has moved to the level of infrastructure and becomes a critical system that is relied upon.

Investment, Risk, and Benefit ▷▷▷▷

Adapted from Zorich, Diane; Waibel, Gunter; and Erqay, Ricky (2008)

1 The impact of administrator, teacher, student, and parent attitudes towards mathematics instruction, difficulty, and low expectations of students with disabilities in mathematics on placement and content access. "Much of the public's self-evident resignation about mathematics education… seems rooted in the erroneous idea that success is largely a matter of inherent talent or ability, not effort" *(National Mathematics Advisory Panel [NMAP], 2008)*. Our stakeholder hypothesis is supported by research which describes that not only are parent involvement and teacher/administrator expectations an effective intervention in preparing students for mathematics success, they also "positively impact student attitudes towards a particular subject area" *(Williams, 2011, p. 36; Hattie, 2009, pp. 69–71)*. "Across all home variables, parental aspiration and expectations for children's educational achievement has the strongest relationship with achievement (d = 0.80)… It is not so much the structure of the family, but rather the beliefs and expectations of the adults in the home that contributes most to achievement" *(Hattie, 2009, pp. 70–71)*. These low expectations regarding mathematics (as part of College and Career Ready Standards), held by members of the IEP team (e.g., LEA representative, special education teacher, parent, and general education teacher) directly impact the selection of appropriate goals and services to support the alignment of specialized instruction to grade-level Core standards, frequently

resulting in a modification of grade-level curriculum rather than a comprehensive plan to improve student outcomes as measured by grade-level standards.

2 Teacher ability to understand, apply, and provide effective Tier I instruction, supported by Tier II–III interventions and specialized instruction in the Utah mathematics Core. The NMAP 2008 report states "research on the relationship between teachers' mathematical knowledge and students' achievement confirms the importance of teachers' content knowledge. It is self-evident that teachers cannot teach what they do not know" *(p. xxi)*.

It is evident to Utah stakeholders that teachers must have both mathematical content knowledge and knowledge/application of effective instruction and interventions to improve the mathematics progress and proficiency of all Utah students. These instructional skills and core concepts must then be intertwined, through IHE preservice programs and ongoing USOE and LEA professional learning opportunities, to ensure an educational system that comprehensively values and addresses the importance of math performance and improvement for each and every student. As the typical teacher's impact on student achievement without effective instruction/intervention are minimal (d = 0.15 to d = 0.35), an intervention or innovative instruction can increase the effects "markedly beyond this… Innovation occurs when a teacher makes a deliberate action to introduce a different (not necessarily new) method of teaching, curriculum, or strategy that is different from what he or she is currently using" *(Hattie, 2009, p. 251)*.

Students with disabilities must receive supported access to effective Tier I mathematics instruction from teachers with the knowledge and skills to address specific student gaps and needs. A large body of research supports the use of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a set of principles for curriculum development that provide equal opportunities to learn from accessibility built into the instructional design *(Center for Applied Special Technology [CAST], 2012)*, which provides additional Tier I support to all students (including students with disabilities) receiving core instruction. *Without this access and instruction, there is no hope of significantly improving student outcomes in grade-level core standards, as students will not have been provided with the integral core instruction, and instead received specialized instruction. Rather, the outcomes will be the same as current outcomes, using the current system of instruction.*

The "six signposts towards excellence" *(Hattie, 2009, pp. 238–239)* supports the conclusion of Utah stakeholders described above, as they describe the teacher and leader behaviors needed to improve educational outcomes,
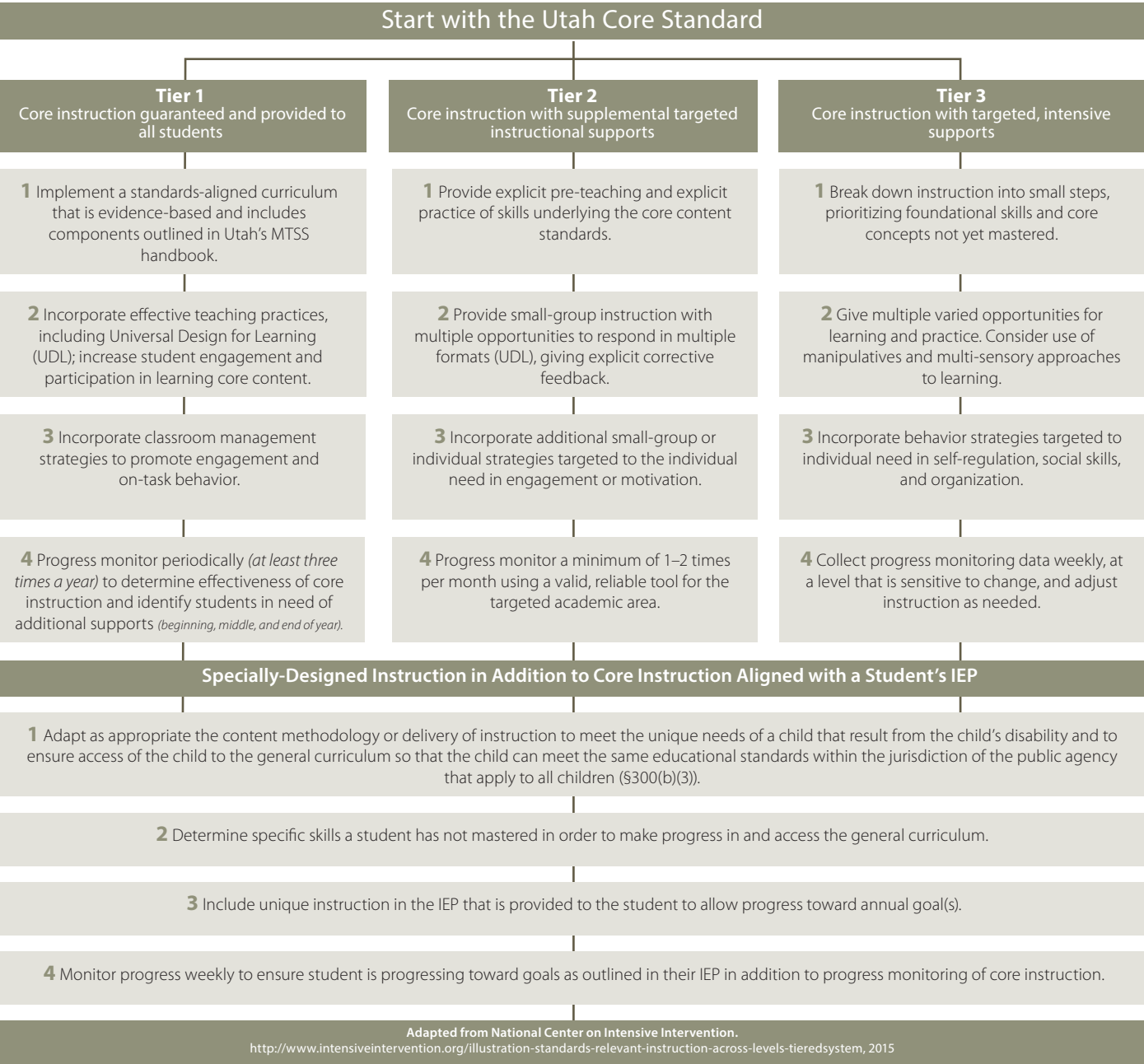
irrespective of additional resources, class size, subject matter, working conditions, and between-school differences. This fact is critical for stakeholders to understand, given that Utah's low education funding and larger class sizes are generally prioritized for improvement, without consideration of the additional interventions that might be more effective to changing outcomes. Those "signposts" indicate that teachers are among the most powerful influences in learning. In Utah, the system of PD/TA delivery, supported by evidence and aligned with the Utah Effective Teaching Standards *(USOE, 2013)* and developing teacher evaluation system (which includes a student growth component), serve to focus and leverage resources on teacher behavior to impact long-term, sustainable change *(Hayes & Lillenstein, 2015)*.

3 Differing levels of tiered support at elementary and secondary settings, with a decrease in support in secondary schools, which is when mathematics concepts become more rigorous and abstract. The system structure of instruction and student support upon moving from an elementary school to a secondary school differs drastically. An MTSS instruction delivery and school improvement framework creates opportunities for differentiated instruction within three tiers of instruction (i.e., Tier I, II, and III) to address student needs through effective core instruction in Tier I, with increasingly intensive, additional, evidence-based academic and social-emotional interventions/supports provided within Tiers II–III to students who are unsuccessful after Tier I instruction *(Hayes & Lillenstein, 2015)*. MTSS relies on ongoing progress monitoring of student data to facilitate and support instructional change in a sustainable manner.

While much research focuses on the successes of having an MTSS or Response to Intervention (RtI) school-wide intervention model to address the needs of all students, few LEAs have successfully bridged the gap between elementary and secondary schools, leaving educational leaders and teachers with many unresolved concerns and the common perception that there are few evidence-based interventions available in secondary settings. Besides considering school and systems-level support in reform efforts, teachers should consider interventions that address varying levels of student needs within the classroom and tiers. In addition to research-based instructional interventions, the Utah Core Standards has varying levels of "depth of knowledge" or cognitive/rigor demands, which can be adjusted and planned for during instruction to support struggling students with grade-level content *(Boston, 2009; Marzano, 2014; Brunner, 2013)*.

Differing tiers of instructional support also permit special educators to focus specialized instruction on the gap or skills the student requires to continue to progress and access
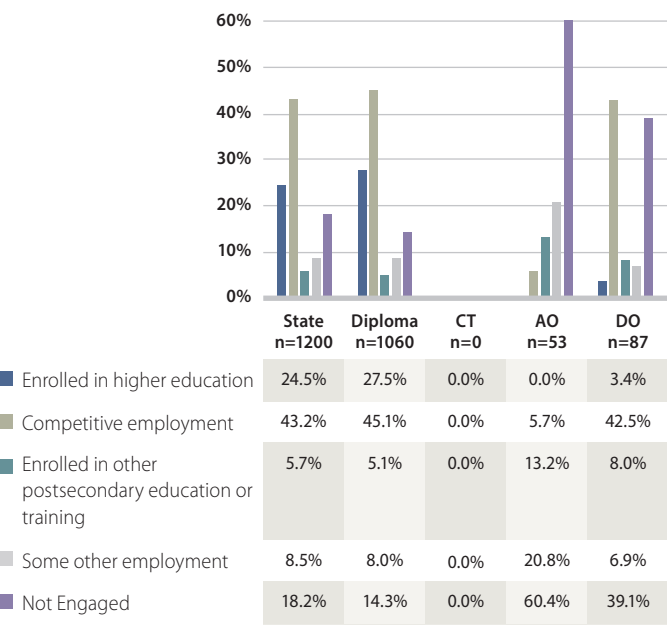
Figure 4: Utah Core Standards within an MTSS

| Start with the Utah Core Standard |

Tier 1
Core instruction guaranteed and provided to all students

1 Implement a standards-aligned curriculum that is evidence-based and includes components outlined in Utah's MTSS handbook.

2 Incorporate effective teaching practices, including Universal Design for Learning (UDL); increase student engagement and participation in learning core content.

3 Incorporate classroom management strategies to promote engagement and on-task behavior.

4 Progress monitor periodically *(at least three times a year)* to determine effectiveness of core instruction and identify students in need of additional supports *(beginning, middle, and end of year)*.

Tier 2
Core instruction with supplemental targeted instructional supports

1 Provide explicit pre-teaching and explicit practice of skills underlying the core content standards.

2 Provide small-group instruction with multiple opportunities to respond in multiple formats (UDL), giving explicit corrective feedback.

3 Incorporate additional small-group or individual strategies targeted to the individual need in engagement or motivation.

4 Progress monitor a minimum of 1–2 times per month using a valid, reliable tool for the targeted academic area.

Tier 3
Core instruction with targeted, intensive supports

1 Break down instruction into small steps, prioritizing foundational skills and core concepts not yet mastered.

2 Give multiple varied opportunities for learning and practice. Consider use of manipulatives and multi-sensory approaches to learning.

3 Incorporate behavior strategies targeted to individual need in self-regulation, social skills, and organization.

4 Collect progress monitoring data weekly, at a level that is sensitive to change, and adjust instruction as needed.

Specially-Designed Instruction in Addition to Core Instruction Aligned with a Student's IEP

1 Adapt as appropriate the content methodology or delivery of instruction to meet the unique needs of a child that result from the child's disability and to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum so that the child can meet the same educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children (§300(b)(3)).

2 Determine specific skills a student has not mastered in order to make progress in and access the general curriculum.

3 Include unique instruction in the IEP that is provided to the student to allow progress toward annual goal(s).

4 Monitor progress weekly to ensure student is progressing toward goals as outlined in their IEP in addition to progress monitoring of core instruction.

Adapted from National Center on Intensive Intervention.
http://www.intensiveintervention.org/illustration-standards-relevant-instruction-across-levels-tieredsystem, 2015

grade-appropriate general education standards, while allowing them to implement evidence-based interventions selected to address those gaps instead of trying to replicate the Tier I Core instruction.

Rather than these three impactful, research-based primary gaps/considerations causing "reform fatigue," they provide an unprecedented opportunity for large-scale student growth in secondary settings by allowing for the development of a "framework for coherence that supports states in connecting college and career readiness standards, MTSS, and educator effectiveness systems" *(Hayes & Lillenstein, 2015, p. 1)*, all of which share a common goal of improving educational quality and effectiveness to increase student outcomes.

Data Analysis at State and LEA Levels

Statewide Assessment Data Analysis

The 2013–2014 school year was the baseline administration of the new statewide assessment (SAGE) in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. The SAGE results demonstrated a low level of proficiency for all students (including students with disabilities) in mathematics, which confirmed the trend identified previously by stakeholders using data from prior state assessments. *The identified achievement gap in proficiency rates between students with and without disabilities is 29.3%. Efforts focused on closing this gap will lead to increased achievement outcomes for students with disabilities.*

Table 1: Utah Mathematics SAGE Results 2013–2014

Subject Area	Subgroup	Percent Proficient	
Mathematics 3–8, 10)	All students	38.8%	
	Students without Disabilities	42.2%	Difference/Gap = 29.3%
	Students with Disabilities	42.2%	

A more focused data analysis identified that all students (those with and without disabilities) are achieving limited proficiency rates in grades six through eight. There are no individual subtests that are particularly more or less challenging for students in this age group. The fact that all students are experiencing a decrease in mathematics proficiency in grades six through eight allows for the alignment and leveraging of existing initiatives across a broad stakeholder population.

Table 2: 2013–2014 Utah Mathematics SAGE Results for Students with Disabilities by Grade

Grade Level	Percent Proficient
3	22.3%
4	21.4%
5	16.1%
6	9.2%
7	9.5%
8	6.6%
10	4.5%

SPP/APR and 618 Data Analysis

In the FFY 2013, Utah showed progress and met goals for the majority of SPP/APR indicators, including those measuring compliance and student outcomes.

Utah has approximately 76,000 students with disabilities ages 3–21 (approximately 71,000 ages 6–21) served with an IEP. Of those ages 6–21, approximately 46% are students with an SLD, 22% have an SLI, and 10% have an Other Health Impairment (OHI). *Using disability category data alone, up to 86% of Utah students with disabilities have mild/moderate*

disabilities. *However, discussions with stakeholders seem to reflect a focus on the generalized perceived ability level of all students with disabilities, with stakeholders basing decisions upon a potential impact on a small number of students with significant disabilities.* It is not the USOE's intention to marginalize the expectations for any student with disabilities, but to instead address the needs of all students with disabilities while ensuring policy and practice decisions meet the needs of all students.

Figure 5: Mathematics Subtest Proficiency Rates for all Subgroups

When looking at Utah students with disabilities ages 6–21, data analysis revealed that 50% are students from low income settings and 9.4% are English Learners (ELs). The majority (65%) are male, 76.5% are white, 16.5% are Hispanic, and less than 2% (each) are other race/ethnicity categories. While these data are informative, further focused data analysis reveals more alarming trends, *in that as students with disabilities grow older and move into secondary settings, IEP teams are deciding on a need for more restrictive settings with less access to non-disabled peers, and possibly the general education Core Standards.* And, while students graduating or leaving with a certificate of completion are increasingly engaging in competitive employment and decreasing rates of

under-engagement, Utah is experiencing decreasing rates of participation in post-secondary education. While only one year of data are included in this report, reviews of data going back multiple years depict similar trends.

For those students with disabilities going on to post-secondary education in Utah IHEs, there has been an overall

Figure 6: Post-school Outcomes FFY 2013

	State n=1200	Diploma n=1060	CT n=0	AO n=53	DO n=87
Enrolled in higher education	24.5%	27.5%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%
Competitive employment	43.2%	45.1%	0.0%	5.7%	42.5%
Enrolled in other postsecondary education or training	5.7%	5.1%	0.0%	13.2%	8.0%
Some other employment	8.5%	8.0%	0.0%	20.8%	6.9%
Not Engaged	18.2%	14.3%	0.0%	60.4%	39.1%

decrease in the percent of students taking entry-level courses in mathematics and a subsequent increase in the number of students enrolled in remediation courses. The Utah State Legislature passed a resolution during the 2015 session to increase the State focus on mathematics as an essential knowledge base for college, career, and independent living.

Figure 7: Students with Disabilities—Percent of Day in General Education Settings

- 80–100% GenEd
- 40–79% GenEd
- 0–39% GenEd
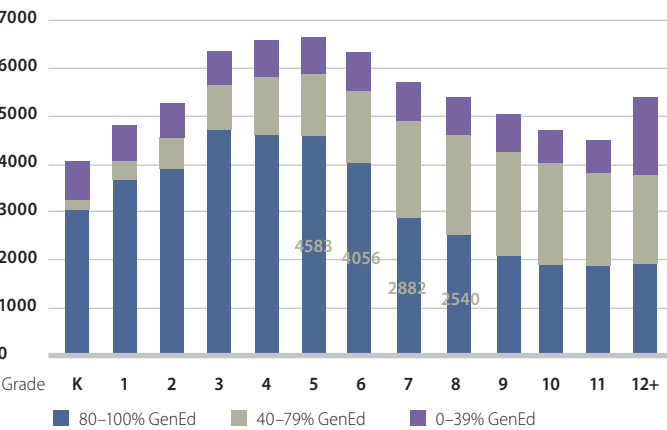
In grades six through eight, students spend an increasingly smaller percentage of the day in general education classrooms, *while at the same time these students are receiving a growing amount of special education and related services. IEP teams, in making decisions based on the individualized student needs, may be overlooking the long term impact of removing students with disabilities from the general education standards, in their desire to address performance gaps.*

Fiscal Data Analysis

In State fiscal year 2015, the budget appropriated by the Utah State Legislature to support public education totaled $3.99 billion, with $2.55 billion coming from the state General and Education funds. Appropriations for public education represent 28% of the total state budget and 48% of state tax revenues from the General and Education funds.

In Utah, approximately 70% of special education and related service funding is provided by the state legislature, using education funds restricted to the use for students with disabilities, with 28% provided federally through IDEA, and 2% provided through local sources.

Utah conducts an annual survey (i.e., Criticality Index) with LEAs to determine the need for various teaching and related server positions. *For the past several years, special education teachers, speech language pathologists (SLPs), and secondary mathematics teachers have been identified within the top ten licensure areas as moderate to critical need.* Students enrolled in these areas in personnel preparation programs are eligible for financial support through the T. H. Bell Teaching Incentive Loan Program. Students are also eligible for loan forgiveness programs through the USDOE. Utah provides Extended Year for Special Educator Stipends for special education teachers and SLPs to work up to 10 additional days per year on the paperwork and evaluation responsibilities required under IDEA, although current funding supports up to four days. *In spite of all these financial incentives, out of 360 special education teachers currently assigned as a teacher of record of secondary mathematics to students with disabilities, only 202 (56%) currently hold the required Mathematics-Special Education endorsement. For educators as a whole in Utah, typically over 90% of educators are considered fully qualified for their assignment.*

PD/TA Data Analysis

The Utah Professional Development Network (UPDN), is the state-funded PD/TA system, and is built on the principles of effective implementation that are embedded in research-based knowledge, including (**a**) using effective knowledge translation strategies to encourage lasting systems change through scaling up; (**b**) incorporating strategies to ensure systematic adoption,

installation, initial and full implementation, innovation, and sustainability of interventions focused on improving indicators; and (**c**) measuring both fidelity of implementation of these interventions at every stage, and the student and educator outcomes envisioned for the intervention.

▶ Professional development and technical assistance includes embedded concepts regarding:

- The importance of a rigorous curriculum and high expectations for students with disabilities with alignment to Utah Core Standards and Utah Alternate Standards, the Essential Elements (EEs);
- The need for tracking of student progress and growth through both formative and summative assessments;
- The need to collect and report accurate student data for accountability purposes;
- The components of research-based effective instruction (including responding to a lack of student progress); and
- The purpose of IDEA and specialized instruction, including the utilization of Standards-Based (SB) IEP components.

A review of PD/TA requests received from LEAs during the 2014–2015 school year suggests that LEAs, rather than addressing PD/TA needs as part of a systematic improvement plan designed to build capacity within the LEA and specifically address student outcomes, continued to request and access PD/TA based on immediate needs or needs that may need to be addressed as part of Tier I positive behavior supports. Of the more than 100 requests for PD/TA received during this time frame, less than five requests address effective instruction within a core content area or SPP/APR areas, while more than 40 requests address student behavioral needs.

Accountability, Monitoring, and Dispute Resolution Data Analyses

Accountability

Utah has an ESEA Flexibility Waiver, which ends this 2014–2015 school year. The USBE voted to apply for a one-year renewal in March 2015. The Utah Comprehensive Accountability System (UCAS) approved in the ESEA Flexibility Waiver is centered on two components: achievement and growth.

Achievement is measured as the percent of students scoring at or above proficient for all English/Language Arts, mathematics, and science assessments. The Student Growth Percentile (SGP) method provides the basis for measuring academic growth in the model. Student growth is determined by comparing each student's progress with that of other students in the state with the same prior achievement pattern.

School Grading and PACE Report

In addition to federal accountability measures under ESEA, starting in 2011, Utah state law (53A-1-1101) and USBE Rule (R277-497) requires that each public school in Utah receive a school grade consisting of an A, B, C, D, or F. Since inception, school grading requirements have been revised by the Utah legislature annually reflect the achievement of students enrolled in the school on statewide assessments (including proficiency and growth/progress). High schools have additional considerations impacting their School Grades, as graduation rates and College and Career Readiness indicators (i.e., ACT® scores) are included.

"On PACE 66% by 2020," a state initiative of Utah's Governor Herbert, is designed to increase educational performance of Utah's students to reach the 66% benchmark while envisioning that at least two-thirds of Utahns ages 20–64 will have earned a postsecondary degree or certificate. PACE is an acronym that represents the coordinated current bulleted and bolded initiatives designed to achieve the following by 2020, followed by the associated metrics:

▶ **Prepare young learners:** 90% proficiency in third, sixth, and eighth grade reading; 90% proficiency in third, sixth, and eighth grade math; and 100% of high school seniors taking the ACT test.

▶ **Access for all students:** a 90% high school graduation rate, 80% post-secondary enrollment rate, and elimination of waiting lists in required courses.

▶ **Complete certificates and degrees:** 13% of the workforce will have board-approved certificates, 14% of the workforce will have associates degrees, 28% of the workforce will have bachelor's degrees, and 11% of the workforce will have graduate degrees.

▶ **Economic alignment:** 90% of graduates will be employed in their fields of study.

In addition to receiving a school report card with a letter grade, each school receives a PACE report.

Monitoring and Dispute Resolution

Utah LEAs typically display high rates of compliance with IDEA and Special Education Rules; however, FFY 2013 monitoring data reflected trends which present a potential barrier to improved student outcomes in mathematics:

▶ General education teachers attended IEP meetings in 94% of the files reviewed; however, interviews with parents, students, and staff reflect that general education teachers may not stay for the entire meeting or contribute expertise on the grade-level Core standards or how the student could be involved and supported within those grade-level standards.

▶ IEPs address how the student's disability affects their progress and involvement in the general curriculum in 76.5% of files reviewed.

▶ IEPs address how students will participate in statewide assessments in 89.3% of the files reviewed; however, comparison of IEP decisions and state assessment reports on participation of students with disabilities do not align.

▶ General education teachers, when interviewed, did not report strategies to assist students who are experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties.

▶ Dispute resolution data reflect low numbers of disputes compared to the national average, yet show a small trend of stakeholder concerns regarding IEP team decisions regarding placement/LRE, services, goal selection and provision, and behavior supports.

Planned for over the last five years, and fully implemented during the 2014–2015 school year, the USOE changed from monitoring only compliance to providing consistent leadership and targeted support to LEAs around state priority areas for improvement with student outcomes (i.e., preschool, school to post-school transition, and effective instruction in mathematics and literacy).

Need for Additional Data Analysis, Use, and PD/TA

During the data review process used in the development of Utah's SSIP, the State identified some additional data needs. First, the USOE has not been using existing data to the fullest extent possible. Data are available for USOE analysis on multiple teacher, student, school, and LEA variables. In spite of data available, the USOE has not used data to identify statewide priorities, to design statewide instructional initiatives, or to prioritize the use of limited resources outside of individual sections.

Second, USOE and LEA staff are not sufficiently trained in the interpretation and use of large-scale data. USOE has addressed this need by conducting small group data reviews at the state and the LEA level. During these data drill meetings, USOE staff and LEA staff collaboratively reviewed data from multiple sources, compared results to identify barriers to data quality, discussed data definitions and understanding, considered guiding questions, and identified areas for further action. These data drill meetings were held by multiple USOE sections and were available to LEAs several times during the 2014–2015 year. During 2015–2016, further activities are planned for collaborative data use within the USOE and LEAs.

Finally, ongoing data analysis and planning will be required for implementation of Phase II and Phase III of the SSIP. As Utah works to change statewide systems and improve outcomes for all students including students with disabilities, a continuous review of data will be essential to be sure the state is on track to meet annual and long term targets. Throughout the five-year implementation of the SSIP, Utah must annually review student, teacher, school, and LEA data to evaluate the effectiveness of improvement strategies and to modify implementation as needed.

State Infrastructure Analysis

Infrastructure Strengths

Utah has a variety of strong, aligned statewide initiatives in the areas of PD/TA, data, and USOE support (i.e., accountability/monitoring, fiscal, quality standards, and governance) that are associated with high-performing programs for students with disabilities (as well as those without disabilities), used to support improvement of student outcomes, and improve LEA capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain the use of evidence-based practices in Utah's selected SiMR.

First, Utah has statewide professional learning standards (e.g., quality standards and governance) codified in 53A-3-701 since 2014, defined as a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement. Utah LEAs are required to implement high quality professional learning that meets the following standards (based on the *Learning Forward Standards [2015]*):

▶ Occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, individual and collective responsibility, and goal alignment;

▶ Requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning;

▶ Requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning;

▶ Uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning;

▶ Integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes;

▶ Applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change; and

▶ Aligns its outcomes with performance standards for teachers and school administrators as described in rules of the State Board of Education (*i.e., Utah Effective Teaching Standards and Utah Effective Leadership Standards*) and performance standards for students as described in the Core curriculum standards adopted by the State Board of Education.

Standards align with the skills necessary to successfully lead educators to teach the Utah Core Standards and improve outcomes for Utah students. These standards direct the work of USOE and LEA staff by providing both quality standards and governance in designing and providing high quality professional learning opportunities, regardless of topic area, thereby impacting PD/TA.

The foremost strength of the Utah model for professional learning, supported by USOE TA documents that target specific skills needed by educators and school leaders to improve student performance, is an existing high expectation across the public of what successful education "looks like". Looking back at the primary root causes of Utah's math performance for students with disabilities demonstrates that the *existing state law and standards not only include high expectations for teachers and administrators, but also define an expectation for content knowledge and instructional planning to occur based on the state grade-level standards and instructional best practices.* School administrators are held to those same high expectations with Utah Educational Leadership Standards requiring them to "establish measurable expectations for all students,... incorporate diverse perspectives and build consensus to provide equitable, appropriate, and effective learning opportunities for every student to achieve,... [and] require all educators to know and use" (*USOE, 2011*). These requirements, which apply to all Utah educators and administrators, clearly define

expectations for both students with disabilities and the professionals who serve to educate them, while also requiring collaboration with parents to improve outcomes. These universal, general education supports alone address two of the three primary root causes identified initially by stakeholders and supported through data analysis and research.

The USBE has defined licensure requirements for general education secondary teachers of mathematics and special educators. In the last two years, the USBE has added a requirement for special educators serving as the "teacher of record" for students with disabilities in mathematics to demonstrate competency with state secondary mathematics requirements, which now requires additional IHE coursework in mathematics and passing of a related PRAXIS Series® mathematics assessment. This state requirement, while increasing the numbers of secondary special educators with advanced knowledge and understanding of mathematics concepts, has also resulted in the identification of common misperceptions regarding the need and ability of students with disabilities to access high-level, abstract mathematics.

With USOE support, LEAs have increased opportunities for co-teaching in middle schools to address the need for a partnership of mathematics content knowledge (general education teacher) and ability to differentiate and provide specialized instruction (special education teacher). The co-teaching model not only emphasizes the strengths of both teachers, but allows them to build capacity in knowledge and application of good-quality effective instruction which addresses the needs of all students. Utah student data from classrooms where the educators participated in content and co-teaching PD/TA show that both students with and without disabilities make gains of 68–79% in a co-taught classroom, supporting this dual approach.

During the 2015 legislative session, several bills were passed and appropriations made that support the work defined within this SSIP. A new initiative designed to strengthen college and career readiness by enhancing the skill levels of school counselors to provide college and career counseling to all students received $400,000 of State support, and will provide a new College and Career Readiness Certificate for all school counselors who meet the required criteria. Funds were provided to support teachers who are currently licensed to teach secondary mathematics in the development of leadership skills so that LEAs can establish coaching and mentoring programs. The Utah House of Representatives passed a resolution in support of Governor Herbert's PACE goals and recognized the importance of attaining proficiency in mathematics while in high school (*House Resolution 5, 2015*). The Career and College Readiness Mathematics Competency

bill requires the USBE to establish mathematics competency standards for all students (*Senate Bill 196, 2015*).

Governor Herbert, on July 17, 2014, outlined three principles to guide educational improvement efforts (described below) aligned with the efforts of Utah's SSIP, and leveraged to demonstrate solidarity on the need for changing expectations and practices.

1 *Maintain high academic standards in all subjects, and for all students.*
2 Monitor and limit the federal government's role in education.
3 Preserve our state and local control of our education system, including curriculum, materials, testing, and instructional practices.

Additional infrastructure supports have been designed and facilitated by USOE staff to support the capacity of LEAs to address the instructional needs of all students. Initiatives implemented by the Teaching and Learning, Assessment, Title I and Federal Programs, CTAE, and Data and Statistics sections of the USOE address the need to develop LEA policies and practices that ensure all teachers are prepared to work with students with disabilities, students are provided access to differentiated instruction and effective interventions to meet their needs, all students are included in accessible statewide assessments, and all students are supported to reach college and career readiness upon leaving high school. All programs supported with federal funds have collaborated on the implementation of the Utah Consolidated Application (UCA), which allows LEAs to develop a single improvement plan that addresses their entire academic program need and the funding sources used to support each improvement activity. In many cases, multiple sources of funding are braided in order to support improvement for all students while honoring the purposes for which the funding was awarded.

In addition to those infrastructure supports designed and facilitated by USOE staff in support of all students, there are initiatives implemented by the USOE Special Education Services section that serve to support improved outcomes, such as the UPDN, Results-Driven Accountability (RDA), and UMTSS. The UPDN system for state-wide special education professional learning is based on state and LEA data and supports the existing general education professional learning opportunities (e.g., Professional Learning Series [PLS] and Title I), and provides LEAs with varying levels of supported general education and special education learning experiences, based on their needs and data. Aligned with UPDN support is the RDA general supervision monitoring system (i.e., UPIPS) and UMTSS, all of which provide a multi-tiered model of support to LEAs. UPDN PD/TA and UMTSS offers

three levels of support, including Universal, Targeted, and Intensive Tiers. RDA Monitoring allows for five levels of support to LEAs, including Supporting and Guiding Tiers, which provide minimal USOE efforts, to the Assisting Tier, which involves more USOE efforts, to Coaching and Directing Tiers which involve ongoing supports, activities, and program implementation changes coached and/or directed by the USOE. All tier decisions are data-based, appealable, and rely on collaboration with the LEA during improvement planning.

Figure 8: Alignment of PD/TA, UMTSS, and RDA Support
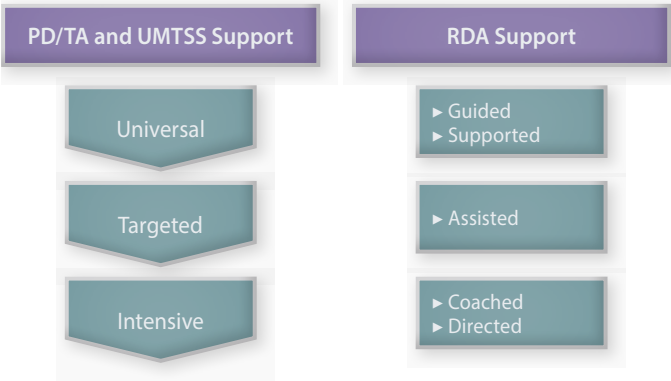
UMTSS, a five-year project funded by the use of State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) and IDEA funds, assists USOE and LEA staff to understand and apply the skills needed to develop and implement a framework for implementing a data-driven, problem-solving, multi-tiered model for supports that builds the capacity for sustained implementation across whole LEAs and the state, regardless of personnel changes. Utah's model for MTSS (i.e., UMTSS) includes the following critical components: evidence-based practices, instructionally relevant assessments, team-based problem solving, data-based decision making, evidence-based professional learning, supportive leadership, and meaningful parent and student involvement. UMTSS staff are strategically placed in different departments throughout the USOE to ensure that policy and practice decisions are rooted in the MTSS model, incorporate the critical components, and address the needs of all learners, including those with diverse needs, such as students with disabilities, students who are EL, and those receiving Title I and other supportive services.

This work is rooted within implementation science, considering both stages of implementation and drivers of implementation (*National Implementation Research Network, 2015*). The USOE, to develop the capacity for sustainable reform, considered both the capacity of the USOE and the capacity of the LEAs and other state agencies and organizations, recognizing that reform efforts require "more comprehensive oversight, planning, and problem solving than most SEAs and LEAs are used to" (*Reform Support

Network, 2013, p. 3*). Included in those planning efforts is the understanding that there are six practices associated with higher achievement when coupled with high expectations (*Telfer, 2011*):

1 Effective data use;
2 Focused, nonnegotiable goals (which are required of all personnel);
3 The selection and implementation of shared instructional practices which focus on effective instruction and require collaboration;
4 Deep implementation of selected strategies, with the fidelity and scale sufficient to resolve problems;
5 Monitoring and providing feedback and support on how to teach, rather than what to teach; and
6 Continuous inquiry and learning to reflect on and improve practices.

Currently, USOE Leadership and staff support the expectation that collaboration is necessary to move student outcomes and are committed to sharing responsibility and efforts for all students.

Infrastructure Gaps

Despite infrastructure strengths there are also unique challenges that may impact Utah's selected SiMR. In particular, best practices are not consistently coordinated and applied across the USOE with fidelity, nor does the USOE utilize fidelity/quality standard measures to ensure consistent application on PD/TA or full implementation, (*National Implementation Research Network, 2015; Fixsen, 2005*). This alone is cause for concern when designing initiatives, as "the most effective intervention will not produce positive effects if it is not implemented" (*Fixsen, 2005, p. 55*).

In addition to Utah's struggle to maintain fidelity with existing initiatives, the majority of current initiative measurement of initiative results remain focused on amount of support (inputs), rather than change in teacher behavior/ student outcome (outputs) (*Guskey, 2002*). Despite existing professional learning standards, some USOE and LEA staff lack full understanding and agreement of the design/contents of high-quality professional learning, lack the instructional strength of UDL, USOE & LEA understanding duplicate efforts inefficiently, and struggle to find adequate fiscal resources to implement coaching, shown to positively impact the implementation of learning to classroom instruction, to ensure ongoing implementation/application of professional learning within classrooms (*Fixsen, 2005*).

Additionally, although the USOE provides the Public Education Data Gateway resource, USOE staff, LEAs, and the public are not provided with focused data reporting and progress monitoring reports around state priority areas, frequently resulting in data overload and scattered initiatives dependent upon the priorities of individual USOE and LEA personnel.

Most USOE staff lack access and time to research databases, including professional journals, to enable the discovery, use, citation, and explanation of evidence-based practices. Also, although the USOE engages stakeholders for data, policy, and practice review and input, this engagement occurs within silos, without broad representation of all impacted stakeholders and without widespread dissemination of results and decisions *(Cashman, 2014; Hayes & Lillenstein, 2015; Rhim, 2014; Zorich, 2008)*.

At the USOE, there remains a need to ensure initiatives are aligned *(Hayes & Lillenstein, 2015)*, nonnegotiable, sustainable, and address the needs of students with disabilities across departments and all staff (i.e., governance). These activities need to occur with ongoing collaboration and cross-departmental planning, assessment and data review, communication, and problem solving; all of which are vital to successful implementation of a relatively new state Core

in mathematics and a one-year-old statewide assessment. As discussed previously, Utah's scarcity of secondary general education mathematics teachers, special education teachers (with math Core content knowledge) and SLPs, result in an ongoing dilemma for LEAs with the provision of grade-level mathematics instruction, supplemented by specialized instruction.

Individual legislative actions recognized through bill language and broadcasted discussions, both recent and historical, send mixed messages about the public expectations of students with disabilities and their ability to access Utah Core Standards, participate in statewide assessments, or graduate ready for college and career.

In LEAs, many of the infrastructure gaps are the same as at the USOE level, resulting in administrators and teachers who may not be prepared with the appropriate content or pedagogy in preservice or inservice to address the needs of a diverse group of students, lack of experience in implementing a newly required state Core being phased in over the last few years, and limited time to explore, plan for, or implement evidence-based interventions designed to address the needs of specific students. These gaps are exponentially compounded by the limited research conducted that addresses the specific needs of secondary students.

The gaps mentioned above directly contribute to the root causes of Utah's low performance of students with disabilities on SAGE mathematics assessments and reinforce the impact of infrastructure gaps to mathematics performance of students with disabilities.

State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR)

Utah will increase the percentage of students with SLI or SLD in grades six through eight who are proficient on the SAGE mathematics assessment by 11.11% over a five year period.

When Utah meets the targets established with the subset of students identified within the SiMR through the use of Broad Coherent Improvement Strategies, achievement results for the entire State will improve not only in mathematics, but may also improve graduation rates and post-school outcomes while decreasing dropout rates.

SiMR Target Setting
Utah used a systematic analysis process which considered current and trend data, research, and the review of infrastructure strengths and gaps to determine root causes for the current outcomes, enable the alignment and leverage of existing initiatives, maximize resources, and encourage involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in developing the SSIP to impact the selected SiMR.

The target for Utah's SiMR follows the same pattern as established for Utah's ESEA Flexibility Waiver AMO targets overall. The long-term goal is to reduce by half the gap between the current percent of students with disabilities who are proficient on the SAGE assessment and the current percent of all students who are proficient on the SAGE over the next five years (by FFY 2018). The starting point is the percent of students with disabilities classified as having an SLI or an SLD who are proficient on the SAGE assessment in FFY 2013. During the intervening years, Utah must incrementally increase the percentage of students with disabilities who are proficient.

Selecting a Subgroup for Broad Coherent Improvement Strategies
Utah conducted a detailed review of SAGE assessment results to identify the group(s) of students to target for improvement efforts. A review of proficiency levels reveals that across grades six through eight, an increasingly larger percent of students are in the "Approaching Proficient" (Proficiency Level 2) category and, if targeted for improvement, are ready to move into proficiency. This change would support students at a critical stage in learning, as "middle school is the critical stage for closing any gaps between the students' knowledge base and the math skills needed to succeed in algebra" *(Williams, 2011)*.

When considering the level of proficiency on SAGE assessments for students with disabilities in grades six through eight in the area of mathematics, it is clear that by grade eight there is a substantial reduction in proficiency. Students in grades six and seven (both with and without disabilities) are achieving higher levels of proficiency on all subtests of the SAGE assessment. If these students are targeted for more intensive instruction, the skills they achieve will support higher proficiency rates, and likely transfer to higher proficiency rates in future mathematics courses.

Because students with and without disabilities are "Approaching Proficient" at comparable rates, an analysis of disability-specific variables was conducted to determine whether any of these variables could help the state to identify the most effective group(s) of students to target for the SiMR.

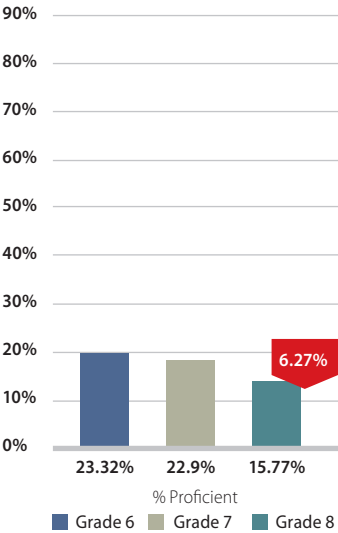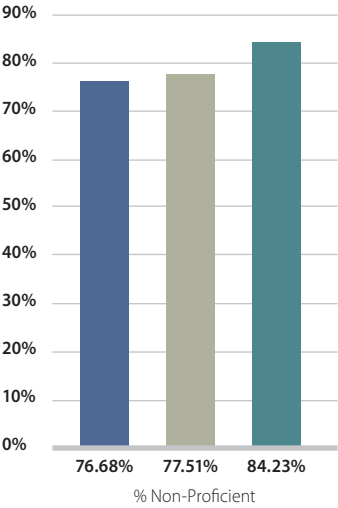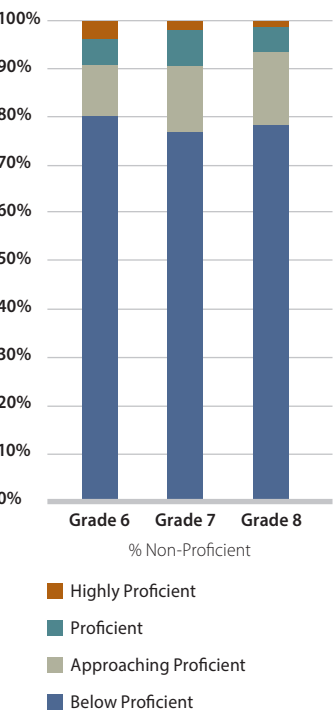**Figure 9**: Proficiency of Students with Disabilities Grades 6–8

% Non-Proficient

| 76.68% | 77.51% | 84.23% |

% Proficient

| 23.32% | 22.9% | 15.77% |

6.27%

■ Grade 6   ■ Grade 7   ■ Grade 8

Figure 10: Proficiency Levels of Students with Disabilities Grades 6–8 Mathematics

% Non-Proficient

- Highly Proficient
- Proficient
- Approaching Proficient
- Below Proficient

A review of proficiency rates based on the amount of time the student spends in the general education setting reveals a relationship between the amount of time students spend in general education settings and achievement of proficiency. Additionally, there appears to be a relationship between students spending 80% or more of the day in general education settings and achieving a score of Approaching Proficiency as compared to students spending less time in general education settings.

A closer look at students in these two disability categories indicates students with SLI or SLD who are spending 80% or more of the day in the general education setting and scoring at the Approaching Proficient level would benefit from the implementation of Broad Coherent Improvement Strategies. This group of students is uniquely positioned so that a change in proficiency rates among these students will be substantial enough to generate a change in proficiency rates among all students with disabilities in the state.

Figure 11: Students with Disabilities—Mathematics Proficiency Levels and Access to General Education Grades 6–8

- Less than 40%
- 40%–79%
- 80% or more
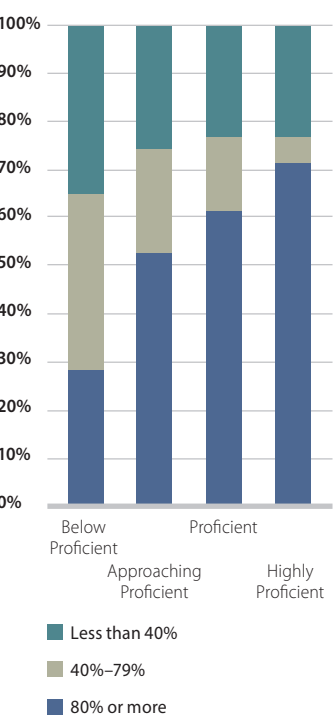
For Utah to reduce the proficiency gap between students with and without disabilities, the State must improve SAGE assessment results by 14.65% over the next five years. Narrowing in on the target group identified for the SiMR, for Utah to reduce the proficiency gap between students with SLI or SLD who are proficient and students without disabilities who are proficient, the State must improve SAGE assessment results by 11.11% over the next five years. If the State increased at an even increment each year, the annual increase needed would be 2.22%.

Table 3: Achievement Gap Between Students with Disabilities and Nondisabled Peers Grades 3–8, 10

Students with Disabilities	12.90%
Students without Disabilities	42.20%
Achievement Gap	29.30%
50% of Gap	**14.65%**

Table 4: Achievement Gap Between Students with SLI or SLD and Nondisabled Peers in Grades 6–8

Proficient Students with SLI or SLD Grades 6–8	14.90%
Proficient Students without Disabilities Grades 6–8	37.12%
Achievement Gap	22.22%
50% of Gap	**11.11%**

To achieve this level of increase, 414 students with SLI or SLD in grades six through eight must move from not proficient and approaching proficient to proficient each year. Further, the increased rate of proficiency attained during the prior year must be maintained.

By increasing the proficiency of the subpopulation of students with SLI or SLD achieving proficiency, the overall proficiency rate among students with all disability types across all tested grades will increase by 40.14% from current proficiency levels, thereby reducing the achievement gap between students with disabilities and non-disabled peers.

LEA Selection for Participation in the SSIP and SiMR, Evaluation and Plan for Scaling Up

To achieve the improvement goal established in the SiMR, Utah must establish a strong foundation for implementation of Broad Coherent Improvement Strategies. As noted in the infrastructure analysis, some strategies will require significant system change efforts before positive outcomes will be observed. To effectively align Utah's improvement efforts with existing initiatives, leverage the use of scarce resources, and target interventions to provide the largest change in the shortest time frame, Utah must identify pivotal LEAs for the early stages of implementation. In the selection of initial participant LEAs, multiple factors were considered to evaluate implementation readiness, including: PACE, School Grades, UCAS, Title I Priority or Focus School status, UMTSS project participation, RDA tiered monitoring level, the achievement gap between students with disabilities when compared to students without disabilities, and administrative support. In addition to these readiness factors, current SAGE data were reviewed to identify a subset of LEAs with a large subpopulation of students with SLI or SLD in grades six through eight scoring at the Approaching Proficient level. LEAs were selected from three size categories (large, medium, small), population density (urban, suburban, rural), and from both school district and charter school organizational structures. This approach was selected to test effectiveness across settings, in preparation for scaling up. A subset of nine LEAs were invited for participation in the initial implementation.

SiMR Baseline Data and Targets

Considering only the subset of nine LEAs identified for initial implementation of the SiMR, to reduce the gap between students with SLI or SLD who are proficient and students without disabilities who are proficient, participating LEAs must improve SAGE assessment results by 41.38% over the next five years.

Figure 12: Mathematics Proficiency of Students with SLI or SLD Spending 80% or More in General Education

- **3%** Highly Proficient
- **7%** Proficient
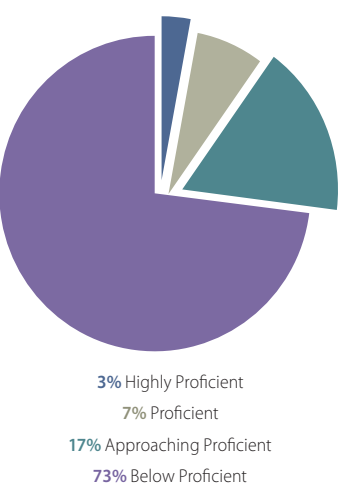- **17%** Approaching Proficient
- **73%** Below Proficient

Table 5: Impact of Growth in SLI or SLD Target Group on the Proficiency Rate of All Students with Disabilities

LEAs with the largest number of students 6–8 Approaching Proficient		Total SWD Age 3–12	Total SWD Grade 6–8	Count of Students Grade 6–8 SLI & SLD	Count of 6–8 SLI & SLD Approaching Proficient	Percent of 6–8 SLI & SLD Approaching Proficient	Percent of 6–8 SLI & SLD Proficient	All Grades All Disabilities Percent Proficient
Large	Alpine District	5,058	1,672	1,237	325	8.89%	13.11%	21.89%
	Davis District	5,026	1,585	905	176	6.43%	9.07%	15.86%
	Jordan District	4,092	1,293	883	155	5.21%	7.11%	13.80%
	Washington District	2,118	751	512	133	7.41%	8.37%	15.05%
	Granite District	5,197	1,768	1,261	111	3.39%	4.94%	9.52%
Medium	Iron District	739	241	189	47	6.78%	8.47%	13.96%
	Wasatch District	477	155	100	21	6.85%	11.64%	16.91%
Small	Quest Academy	84	36	22	<10	25.00%	2.78%	6.49%
	Spectrum Academy	203	75	12	<10	14.52%	19.35%	23.01%
		22,994	7,576	5,121	986			

For LEAs participating in the initial implementation of Utah's Broad Coherent Improvement Strategies, annual targets were established with the understanding that steadily increasing the number of students expected to attain proficiency will allow all stakeholder groups the opportunity to design an action plan that will be effective in applying the detailed, specific improvement activities developed in Phase II of the SSIP across all Utah schools.

Table 6: Proficiency of Students with SLI or SLD in Early Implementation LEAs

Proficient Students with SLI or SLD Grades 6–8	8.62%
Non-Proficient Students with SLI or SLD Grades 6–8	91.38%
Achievement Gap	82.76%
50% of Gap	41.38%
Average Annual Increase	8.28%

Figure 13: Students with SLI or SLD in Early Implementation LEAs Approaching Proficient by Access to General Education Setting

- ■ 80% or more
- ■ 41%–79%
- ■ 40% or less
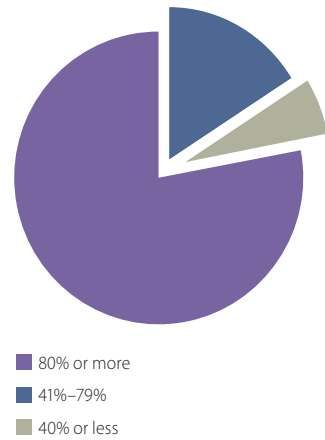
To facilitate early adoption of Broad Coherent Improvement Strategies and successful integration of existing improvement initiatives, Utah has prepared detailed student- and school-level information. LEAs will be asked to consider 2013–2014 SAGE data to identify schools with a large number of students with SLI or SLD in grades six through eight scoring at the Approaching Proficient level. USOE will work collaboratively with LEA administration to identify the best methods for implementation that can then be applied in other areas of the state. LEAs will be asked to identify a sub-set of schools and students who will be targeted for participation in the Improvement strategies.

Table 7: Count of Proficiency Required Annually to Close the Achievement Gap

	Baseline	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19
# Proficient	630	780	1,080	1,580	2,230	3,026
% Proficient	8.62%	10.67%	14.77%	21.61%	30.50%	41.39%
Increase		150	300	500	650	796

Selection of Broad Coherent Improvement Strategies

As outlined by state data and the infrastructure analysis, the USOE has determined that to improve achievement in mathematics, the USOE and LEAs must focus efforts on the three impactful primary considerations/root causes for the lack of mathematics achievement identified by stakeholders.

1 Administrator, teacher, parent, and student attitudes and behavior (resulting in some IEP team decisions that limit grade-appropriate Core mathematics instruction);

2 Teacher understanding of mathematics standards and effective instruction; and

3 An educational system that decreases general education instructional support and interventions in secondary settings, during a time when the mathematics core standards become more rigorous and abstract.

Utah's stakeholders and the research presented earlier to validate stakeholders' insight determined that to improve mathematics achievement, Utah must turn each of those three root causes into a Broad Coherent Improvement Strategy.

1 Administrators, teachers, parents, and students will understand the utility of and expect students with disabilities to master mathematics content (resulting in IEP team decisions that require and scaffold grade-appropriate Core mathematics instruction);

2 General education and special education teacher understanding of mathematics standards and effective instruction will improve; and

3 The state and local educational agencies will increase general education instructional support and interventions in the secondary settings, to scaffold mathematics Core standards as they become more rigorous and abstract.

A focus on implementing High Expectations and Beliefs Content Knowledge and Effective Instruction, and Multi-Tiered System of Supports in Secondary Settings, will result in achievement of the SiMR. For each of these three Broad Coherent Improvement Strategies, Utah recognizes the need to address gaps from the Data Analysis and Infrastructure Analysis. The relationship of the gaps to the Improvement Strategies can be visually represented in the following chart.

Figure 2: Root Cause Concerns/Broad Coherent Improvement Strategies

High Expectations and Beliefs

Inclusion in grade level core content, assessment, graduation requirements, and College and Career Ready Plans.

Leadership | IEP Team Decisions | Partnerships and Collaboration | Pre-service and In-service Professional Learning | Active Engagement of all School Personnel | Data Driven Decision Making | Evidence-Based Practices | Fiscal Support

Math content and pedagogy to provide effective instruction through Universal Design for Learning and evidence-based interventions.

Infrastructure, Scale, Fidelity.

Content Knowledge and Effective Instruction

Multi-Tiered System of Supports in Secondary Settings

Broad Coherent Improvement Strategy 1: High Expectations & Beliefs

Administrators, teachers, parents, and students will understand the utility of and expect students with disabilities to master mathematics content (resulting in IEP team decisions that require and scaffold grade-level Core mathematics instruction).

When stakeholders have a shared vision, teachers' and students' attitudes and beliefs can begin to support improved student outcomes; "teachers' beliefs influence the decisions that they make about the manner in which they teach mathematics... students' beliefs influence their perception of what it means to learn mathematics and their dispositions towards the subject" (*National Council of Teachers of Mathematics [NCTM], 2014, pp. 10–11*). The reverse is also true, as teachers' content knowledge improves, their attitudes about their ability to deliver challenging content also improves. "Moreover, the increase in teachers' opinion of their readiness to deliver challenging mathematics content should be good news in light of repeated concerns over teacher mathematics content knowledge. While a change in attitude is not the same as a change in behavior, it may be taken as a promising early indicator of favorable change in teachers' content knowledge" (*Smithson & Blank, 2006, p. 15*).

Beliefs about learning can then translate into the teachers' presentation of more rigorous content. "An effective teacher provides students with appropriate challenge, encourages perseverance in solving problems, and supports productive struggle in learning mathematics" (*NCTM, 2014, p. 11*). As a result of the expectation to master challenging content, students will develop beliefs and attitudes that foster a growth mindset. "The fixed mindset appears to be more prevalent in mathematics than in other subject areas (*Dweck, 2008*). As students begin to experience success and employ learning strategies, they will be willing to take risks and persevere when presented with tasks that require higher levels of cognitive demand. Further, "situating learning goals within the mathematical landscape supports opportunities to build explicit connections so that students see how ideas build on and relate to one another and come to view mathematics as a coherent and connected discipline (*Fosnot and Jacob 2010; Ma 2010*)" (*NCTM, 2014, p. 13*).

Inclusion in Grade-Level Core, Assessment, Graduation Requirements, and College and Career Ready (CCR) Plans

All stakeholders will agree/expect that:

▶ What we focus on is what is improves.

▶ Students with disabilities are general education students first and students with disabilities second.

▶ Up to 86% of student with disabilities have mild/moderate disabilities and thus decisions about students with disabilities' access and progress in mathematics grade-appropriate courses should not be based on the small number of students with significant disabilities.

▶ Students' post-school outcomes are affected by their enrollment in grade-appropriate mathematics courses and mastery of grade-appropriate mathematics concepts.

▶ All students can master grade-appropriate mathematics standards.

▶ Their participation plays a role in helping students with disabilities master grade-appropriate mathematics content.

Students with disabilities will have a mindset that they are capable of mastering mathematics content. Educators, parents, and students with disabilities will agree that regardless of whether a student's disability is mild, moderate, or severe, all students need to access and master grade-level mathematics content.

Educators and parents will expect students with disabilities to enroll in grade-appropriate courses and take the aligned grade-appropriate assessments. Further, they will not use the IEP process to allow substitutions for mathematics courses that are not the same rigor and content as those required for graduation.

School counselors, parents, and students with disabilities will write CCR plans (as part of IEPs) that expect students to enroll in grade-appropriate mathematics courses leading to grade-appropriate end-of-level tests, and access the necessary supports for success.

Leadership
Policy makers (e.g., Utah Legislature, USBE, and local school boards) will ensure policies address improving mathematics proficiency and on students' ability to successfully finish four years of grade-appropriate mathematics courses, so students with disabilities are prepared to enter Utah IHEs requiring no mathematics remediation.

PTA members and PTI staff will reinforce with parents that students with disabilities can master grade-appropriate mathematics content, regardless of the severity of the students' disabilities, and need to do so in order to be college and career ready.

LEA staff, school principals, and teacher leaders will require that students with disabilities have access to grade-level universal Core content and evidenced-based instructional strategies as well as any required additional services and support.

Preservice and Inservice Professional Learning
The USOE and Utah IHEs will work together, in partnership with CEEDAR, to ensure all IHE instructors and preservice educators agree that with appropriate evidence-based instruction and any necessary supplemental instruction/intervention, all students can successfully master grade-appropriate mathematics content. IHE coursework will refrain from using deficit language that could lead an educator to have a fixed mindset that students with disabilities are incapable of mastering mathematics content.

IHE coursework will prepare preservice school counselors and school psychologists to reject the mindset that a cognitive score instead of effective instruction is the factor that determines a student's ability to master mathematics content. Similarly, evidence-based inservice professional learning, including the work of the UPDN and PLS, will instill in all administrators, educators, related service providers, and paraprofessionals that students with disabilities, regardless of the severity of the disability, can master mathematics standards and that general education and special education teachers are prepared to deliver, and related service providers are prepared to support, the instruction required for students with disabilities to access and master grade-level Utah Core Standards.

Data and Evidence-Based Practices and Decisions
USOE, LEAs, and school staff will collect and analyze data about the attitudes and beliefs that administrators, teachers, parents, and students have about the ability of students with disabilities to master grade-level Core mathematics content in addition to gathering, analyzing, and making instructional decisions based on mathematics achievement data.

USOE staff will continue to provide data drill meetings to help LEA staff understand their LEA data, including mathematics course enrollment, proficiency data, and disability demographics information so LEAs can make data-based decisions about program improvement.

LEA and school staff will collect and analyze data about the mathematics courses students with disabilities enroll in and pass, instructionally relevant assessments, including SAGE proficiency scores, and all other available LEA- and school-level mathematics data so LEA and school staff can make data-based decisions about program and course improvement.

Active Engagement of All School Personnel
Administrators, general and special education staff at the USOE, LEA, and school levels will engage in the work of improving mathematics content mastery together. All staff will agree that for students with disabilities to improve mathematics achievement, universal Core instruction will improve for all students. Further, all staff will agree that students with disabilities are general education students first and students with disabilities second.

School counselors will recognize that the organization of the master schedule will allow students with disabilities to enroll in grade-appropriate mathematics courses while still being able to enroll in supplemental courses and/or access support and interventions when needed and appropriate. School counselors will meet with all students, including students with disabilities, to form a plan for course selection, college and career readiness preparation, college and career readiness benchmark discussions, and pathway selection.

SLPs will recognize that they can contribute to improving achievement by providing effective evidence-based instruction which includes teaching students with disabilities mathematics vocabulary and linguistic concepts.

IEP Team Decisions
IEP team members (LEA/school staff, parents, and students) will believe that each student with a disability, regardless of the severity of the disability, can master grade-level mathematics content and write IEP goals that reflect that belief. IEP teams will agree to require students with disabilities to enroll in grade-appropriate mathematics courses and recognize it is their responsibility to determine the supports the students will need in order to be successful in those courses.

LEAs will analyze their LRE data (Indicator 5) and determine LEA program improvement goals based on the earlier identified trend for students in Utah to be placed in more restrictive settings the older they get.

Fiscal Support
Policy makers (e.g., Utah Legislature, USBE, and local school boards) will believe that giving educators the tools needed to provide appropriate instruction will improve achievement. Further, policy makers will agree they need to provide

additional funding to schools to support and coach educators in the process of improving mathematics instruction to all students, including students with disabilities.

USOE special education staff will allocate state-level activity funds in expectation and support of helping special educators improve mathematics content knowledge and evidence-based pedagogy, interventions, services, and supports.

LEA and school staff will allocate funds and resources in accordance with their belief that all students, including students with disabilities, can enroll and be successful in grade-appropriate courses when given high quality Core instruction, and any needed interventions, services, and/or supports.

Broad Coherent Improvement Strategy 2: Content Knowledge and Effective Instruction

General education and special education teacher understanding of mathematics standards and effective instruction will improve.

"Research on the relationship between teachers' mathematical knowledge and student achievement supports the importance of teachers' content knowledge in student learning" (*National Mathematics Advisory Panel [NMAP], 2008, p. xxi*). In order for teachers to improve their content knowledge and apply evidence-based principles of effective instruction, they will require professional learning and supports. "Professional development will be required to support teachers to use a variety of teaching strategies that accommodate individual needs and differences. Teachers may be called upon to teach prerequisite knowledge and skills in order to enhance learning academic content and address academic and nonacademic barriers that may be interfering with student learning and performance" (*NASDSE, NDRN, 2007, Step 3, p. 4*). When surveyed by the USOE about Utah's implementation of the mathematics Core standards, 70% of Utah teachers stated they needed more time to work with peers developing common lessons and assessments; 69% stated they needed time to develop instructional sequences (lesson plans); 55% stated they more help with instructional strategies, including interventions; 21% stated they needed a better understanding of the mathematics trajectories; and 14% stated they needed more depth of knowledge about mathematics.

Improving teachers' knowledge of Core standards will enable them to provide high quality universal instruction. "Math instruction includes instruction in arithmetic skills, problem solving, conceptual knowledge, and reasoning ability while also addressing the contributing functions of application, procedural fluency, number sense and visual-spatial, temporal

and language processing (*Colorado Department of Education, 2005*). If 70% or more of the students are achieving below proficiency on summative assessments, the core instructional program needs to be improved before focusing on a system of intervention" (*NASDSE, NDRN, 2007, Step 3, p. 22*).

Once teachers are providing highly effective Core instruction, they will be able to identify students who are in need of more targeted instruction. "Researchers have consistently found that… students who have struggled to learn mathematics, are more likely to have teachers who have weaker mathematics backgrounds, less professional experience, and certification outside of rather than in mathematics, and who are perceived to be less effective (*Battey 2013; Darling-Hammond 2007; Flores 2007; Stiff, Johnson, and Akos 2011*). Moreover, in instruction for these students, [effective mathematics teaching practices] are rarely implemented consistently to support meaningful learning. Instead, lessons commonly focus primarily on rote skills and procedures, with scant attention to meaningful mathematics learning (*Ellis 2008; Ellis and Berry 2005*)" (*NCTM, 2014, p. 61*).

Math Content and Pedagogy to Provide Effective Instruction through UDL and Evidence-Based Interventions

Educators will be properly licensed and endorsed, including having passed the appropriate PRAXIS Series® tests, to teach to the grade-appropriate mathematics Core standards of all assigned students.

Educators will deliver high quality universal instruction aligned with grade-appropriate Core standards to all students, using the Utah Effective Educator Standards as their guide. General and special educators will use UDL principles and other evidence-based pedagogy practices to provide universal Core instruction. Special educators will supplement Core instruction with high-quality, evidence-based supports and interventions.

Leadership

USOE staff, LEA staff, school principals, and teacher leaders will require that all teachers of record are properly licensed and endorsed to teach the grade-appropriate mathematics content using UDL principles and evidence-based practices. Then, professional learning will be used strengthen content knowledge and evidence-based pedagogy, including the use of principles of UDL and co-teaching, in addition to providing the materials and equipment needed to instruct students with disabilities in inclusive settings.

USOE staff, LEA staff, school principals, and teacher leaders will provide high-quality coaching to new and struggling educators to improve instructional skills.

PTA members and PTI staff will reinforce with parents that students with disabilities require access to grade-level universal Core content and evidenced-based instructional strategies as well as any required additional services and supports, regardless of the severity of the students' disabilities, in order to be college and career ready.

LEA staff, school principals, and teacher leaders will organize the school schedule so educators have time to work in teams sharing instructional successes and problem solving for how to improve instruction and achievement. This time will include an opportunity for general and special education teachers to collaborate about how to improve the access students with disabilities have to inclusive settings, grade-level content, and specialized instruction.

School principals, teacher leaders, and/or related service providers will facilitate student focus/student problem solving teams, to discuss the achievement of struggling students and determine the supports and interventions needed to catch them up with their grade/course-appropriate peers.

Preservice and Inservice Professional Learning

Utah will increase the number of educators who are properly licensed and endorsed to deliver evidence-based instruction in grade-appropriate mathematics content to all students, including supplemental instruction/interventions to struggling learners and specialized instruction to students with disabilities.

The USOE and Utah IHEs will work together, in partnership with CEEDAR, to ensure all Utah IHE preservice general education and special education programs focus sufficient coursework on content and pedagogy, including evidence-based strategies for mathematics instruction to prepare teachers to be successful Core instructors as well as the providers of supplementation instruction/interventions.

Similarly, evidence-based inservice professional learning, including the work on UPDN and online modules available through resources such as the IRIS Center, will strengthen general and special educators' mathematics content knowledge and pedagogy, including skill in co-teaching, using principles of UDL and other evidence-based practices. Educators will be prepared to instruct students with disabilities in the LRE, including inclusive settings, regardless of the severity of the students' disabilities.

Evidence-based inservice professional learning will enable related service providers and paraprofessionals to understand their role in providing and/or supporting evidence-based, effective mathematics instruction.

Professional learning providers will apply the principles of evidence-based professional development, including the selection of evidence-based practices, evidence-based delivery, ongoing coaching and technical assistance, and the evaluation of fidelity and outcomes, and will analyze SAGE and other mathematics assessment results to provide teachers with knowledge about how to fill-in the gaps that students demonstrated.

Data and Evidence-Based Practices and Decisions

USOE staff will analyze SAGE data regarding the mathematics achievement of all students and of students with disabilities. USOE staff will make decisions about the supports (evidence-based professional learning and technical assistance) they will provide to LEAs' staff based on the data analysis. USOE staff will provide this support to LEAs based on their level of need. The nine LEAs identified as having the students whose movement from non-proficient to proficient will achieve Utah's SiMR will initially receive the most intensive supports. All other LEAs will initially receive universal support. Then, during each successive year of SSIP implementation, new LEAs will be added to the group receiving more intensive supports, until all are included.

USOE staff will continue to provide data drill meetings to help LEA staff understand and make decisions based on their LEA data, including mathematics course enrollment, proficiency data, and disability demographics information, so LEAs can make data-based decisions about teacher content knowledge, the effectiveness of universal Core instruction, the application of supplemental instruction and interventions, and general program improvement.

LEA staff will analyze instructionally relevant assessments, including SAGE mathematics data, any LEA-administered mathematics assessment data, school grading data, and teacher evaluation data regarding the mathematics achievement of all students and of students with disabilities and the effectiveness of teachers. LEA staff will make decisions about the supports (professional learning and technical assistance) they will provide to individual schools' staff based on the data analysis.

School staff will analyze instructionally-relevant assessments including SAGE mathematics data, any LEA- and/or school-administered mathematics assessment data, and teacher evaluation data regarding the achievement of all students and of students with disabilities and the effectiveness of teachers. School staff will make decisions about the supports (professional learning and technical assistance) they will provide to individual teachers and related service providers and paraprofessionals based on the data analysis.

School staff will work in teams to analyze the mathematics achievement of individual students, including SAGE data, LEA- and school-wide assessment data, and progress monitoring data, for early identification of struggling students and to determine any interventions and supports needed to assist these students in learning grade-level math content.

Active Engagement of All School Personnel
Administrators, educators, related service providers, and paraprofessionals will collaborate to provide highly effective, evidence-based universal Core instruction based on grade-level standards; analyze all available achievement data, and provide evidence-based interventions to struggling students.

IEP Team Decisions
IEP teams will ensure students are educated in the LRE, and that placement decisions begin with consideration of placement in the general education classroom. IEP teams will ensure that students have access to the general education curriculum and will consider how students' disabilities impact the students' progress and involvement in the general education curriculum. IEP teams will monitor students' response to specialized instruction as well as their progress on annual IEP goals.

Fiscal Support
Policy makers (e.g., Utah Legislature, USBE, and local school boards) will provide IHEs, the USOE, LEAs, schools, and educators with additional funding to provide high-quality preservice training, inservice professional learning, instructional coaching, and the resources, equipment, and materials educators need to deliver high quality universal

Core mathematics instruction to all students, appropriate interventions to struggling students, and appropriate services and supports to students with disabilities.

USOE special education staff will allocate state-level activity funds according to a plan to help special educators improve mathematics content knowledge and pedagogy, including evidence-based instructional strategies, interventions, services, and supports.

LEA and school staff will allocate funds and resources to support general and special educators to improve mathematics content knowledge and pedagogy, including evidence-based instructional strategies, interventions, services, and supports.

Broad Coherent Improvement Strategy 3: Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) in Secondary Settings

The state and local educational agencies will increase general education instructional support and interventions in secondary settings, to scaffold mathematics Core standards as they become more rigorous and abstract.

"Much has been written regarding the state of secondary schools and the need for effective teaching of reading and math. Secondary schools can address the issue of poor achievement in reading and math by taking a systems approach that integrates effective leadership, management, infrastructure, instruction, behavior and discipline, assessment, and transition services to provide a continuum of high quality, effective instruction to all students. This continuum includes targeted interventions for students who do not progress adequately given high quality, effective instruction" (*NASDSE, NDRN, 2007, Step 3, p. 21*). When superintendents were surveyed about how to improve achievement at the secondary school level, "qualitative data yielded three major findings: (**1**) districts must develop the MTSS framework and promote a common language based on this framework, (**2**) a district-wide culture of collaboration must exist, and (**3**) capacity of individuals and learning communities must be built at every system level so improvement is ongoing and sustainable" (*Dulaney, Hallam, & Wall, 2013, p. 37*).

Once the infrastructure to support implementation of an MTSS is in place, "the resources to provide these interventions must be available. At the building level, teams will decide how best to allocate space, time, and personnel to provide quality interventions, as well as how to support the seamless movement of students through various levels of intervention. Regular reevaluation of decisions, reformulation of plans, and renegotiation of agreements based on mutual evaluations of progress, problems, and learners' perceptions of

how well instruction matches their interests and capabilities is ongoing" (*NASDSE, NDRN, 2007, Step 3, p. 4*). When the resources are readily available and team problem solving of students' achievement is simultaneously occurring, students struggling with rigorous and abstract content are able to access the services and supports necessary to master that content. "When a student receives services at the targeted tier of intervention, the goal is to accelerate student learning to close the achievement gap so the student can function within the universal, core group. Ideally, the goal is for the student to function as an independent learner without secondary tier supports" (*NASDSE, NDRN, 2007, Step 3, p. 2*).

Infrastructure, Scale, and Fidelity
USOE staff in all instructional departments (i.e., special education; teaching and learning; career, adult, and technical education; federal programs; and charter schools) will create a collaborative plan to provide LEAs with the professional learning opportunities and technical assistance needed to develop infrastructure for an MTSS, implement an MTSS, analyze the fidelity of the MTSS and the instructional interventions it provides, and then how to scale up the MTSS. The plan will be based on principles of implementation science and LEAs will receive USOE supports based on their stage of implementation and level of need.

LEAs will analyze their infrastructures, and their MTSS frameworks, if they already have them, to determine where they are in the stages of implementation. They will create plans to move from their current stages of implementation through to full implementation.

Schools will analyze their infrastructures, and their MTSS frameworks, if they already have them, to determine where they are in the stages of implementation. They will create plans to move from their current stages of implementation through to full implementation. Schools will design and implement fidelity checks to ensure that the system and interventions are being implemented with fidelity.

Leadership
USOE staff will model an MTSS by providing LEAs with professional learning and technical assistance based on each LEA's state of implementation and need. USOE staff will provide systems coaching to LEAs requesting/requiring intensive support to develop the infrastructure for an MTSS and/or scale up an MTSS.

USOE and LEA staff will understand the components of evidenced-based professional development, so all professional learning opportunities they provide to LEA and school staff will be successful.

Utah's PTI staff will reinforce with parents that students with disabilities require access to grade-level universal Core content and evidenced-based instructional strategies as well as any required additional services and supports, regardless of the severity of the students' disabilities, in order to be college and career ready.

LEA staff will model an MTSS by providing schools with evidenced-based professional learning and technical assistance based on each school's state of implementation and need. LEA staff will provide systems and instructional coaching to schools requesting/requiring intensive support to develop the infrastructure for an MTSS and/or scale up an MTSS and/or to improve the universal Core instruction and interventions provided to students.

LEA staff, school principals, school counselors, and teacher leaders will organize the school schedule, including secondary school schedules, so that intervention times/periods exist during which teachers provide struggling students with mathematics interventions and provide common planning time during the school day to ensure quality collaboration between general education mathematics teachers and special education teachers. The common planning time will be used to plan evidence-based instruction that increases access to grade-level content and specialized instruction for students with disabilities.

School principals, teacher leaders, and/or related service providers will facilitate student focus/student problem solving teams, to discuss the achievement of struggling students and determine the supports and interventions needed to catch them up with their grade-appropriate peers. Schools will design and implement fidelity checks, such as instructional efficacy data collection based on frequent instructional observations, to ensure that the system and interventions are being implemented with fidelity.

Preservice and Inservice Professional Learning
The USOE and Utah IHEs will work together, in partnership with CEEDAR, to ensure all Utah IHE preservice education programs focus sufficient coursework on the components of MTSS and the roles of all educators in implementing an MTSS.

IHE coursework will enable preservice administrators, general and special educators, school psychologists, and school counselors to understand the components of and the role of all educators in an MTSS, the principles of implementation science, and the components of evidence-based professional development.

Similarly, evidenced-based inservice professional learning, including the work of the UPDN, will strengthen administrators', general and special educators', and school psychologists' and school counselors' understanding of the components of and the role of all educators in an MTSS and the principles of implementation science. USOE staff will embed MTSS practices into evidenced-based inservice professional learning to ensure implementation of strategies with higher fidelity at the LEA and school levels.

Evidenced-based inservice professional learning will also enable other related service providers to understand the components of and the role of all educators in an MTSS and the principles of implementation science. This type of professional learning will include collaboration between related service providers and educators to align their roles and responsibilities within an MTSS and move them along the collaboration continuum.

Data and Evidence-Based Practices and Decisions

USOE staff will use the SSIP infrastructure analysis and the collaboration continuum to address identified gaps and align the processes, procedures, professional learning opportunities, and technical assistance used and provided by all instruction departments. USOE staff will use LEA infrastructure analysis to make decisions about the supports (professional learning, technical assistance, and system coaching) they will provide to LEAs' staff based on the data analysis. USOE staff will model an MTSS by using the principles of implementation science and providing this support to LEAs based on their stage of implementation and level of need. The nine LEAs identified as having the students whose movement from non-proficient to proficient will achieve Utah's SiMR will initially receive the most intensive supports. All other LEAs will initially receive universal supports. Then, during each successive year of SSIP implementation, new LEAs will be added to the group receiving more intensive supports, until all are included.

USOE staff will continue to provide data drill meetings to help LEA staff understand their LEA data, including mathematics course enrollment, proficiency data, and disability demographics information, so LEAs can make data-based decisions about the implementation of MTSS within the LEA and all LEA schools.

LEA staff will use LEA and school infrastructure analysis, and the LEA's and schools' stages of implementation to make decisions about the supports (professional learning, technical assistance, and systems and/or instructional coaching) they will provide to schools' staff based on the data analysis.

LEA staff will model an MTSS by using the principles of implementation science and providing this support to schools based on their stage of implementation and level of need. School staff will analyze their infrastructure analysis and stage of implementation and will make decisions about the supports (professional learning, technical assistance, and instructional coaching) they will provide to individual teachers, related service providers, and paraprofessionals based on the data analysis.

School staff will work in teams to analyze the mathematics achievement of individual students, including SAGE data, LEA- and school-wide assessment data, and progress monitoring data, to determine any interventions and supports to provide struggling students.

IEP team members (LEA/school staff, parents, and students) will analyze all the available mathematics data for individual students with disabilities, write appropriate goals, and determine the appropriate services, supports, and placement for the students' successful mastery of grade-appropriate content.

Active Engagement of All School Personnel

Administrators, educators, related service providers, and paraprofessionals will collaborate to implement an MTSS with fidelity. This active engagement will enable all of the stakeholders to continue movement along the collaboration continuum.

IEP Team Decisions

IEP team members (LEA/school staff, parents, and students) will analyze all the available mathematics data for individual students with disabilities, write appropriate goals, and determine the appropriate services, supports, and placement necessary for the students' successful mastery of grade-appropriate content.

Fiscal Support

Policy makers (e.g., Utah Legislature, USBE, and local school boards) will provide IHEs, the USOE, LEAs, schools, and educators with additional funding to provide high-quality preservice training, inservice professional learning, systems and instructional coaching, and the resources, equipment, and materials educators need to implement an MTSS with fidelity.

USOE special education staff will allocate state-level activity funds according to a plan to help LEAs' and schools' staff implement and/or scale up an UMTSS which will support the improvement of pedagogy, including evidence-based instructional strategies, interventions, services, and supports. LEA staff and school staff will allocate funds and resources to implement and/or scale up an MTSS which will support the improvement of pedagogy, including evidence-based instructional strategies, interventions, services, and supports.
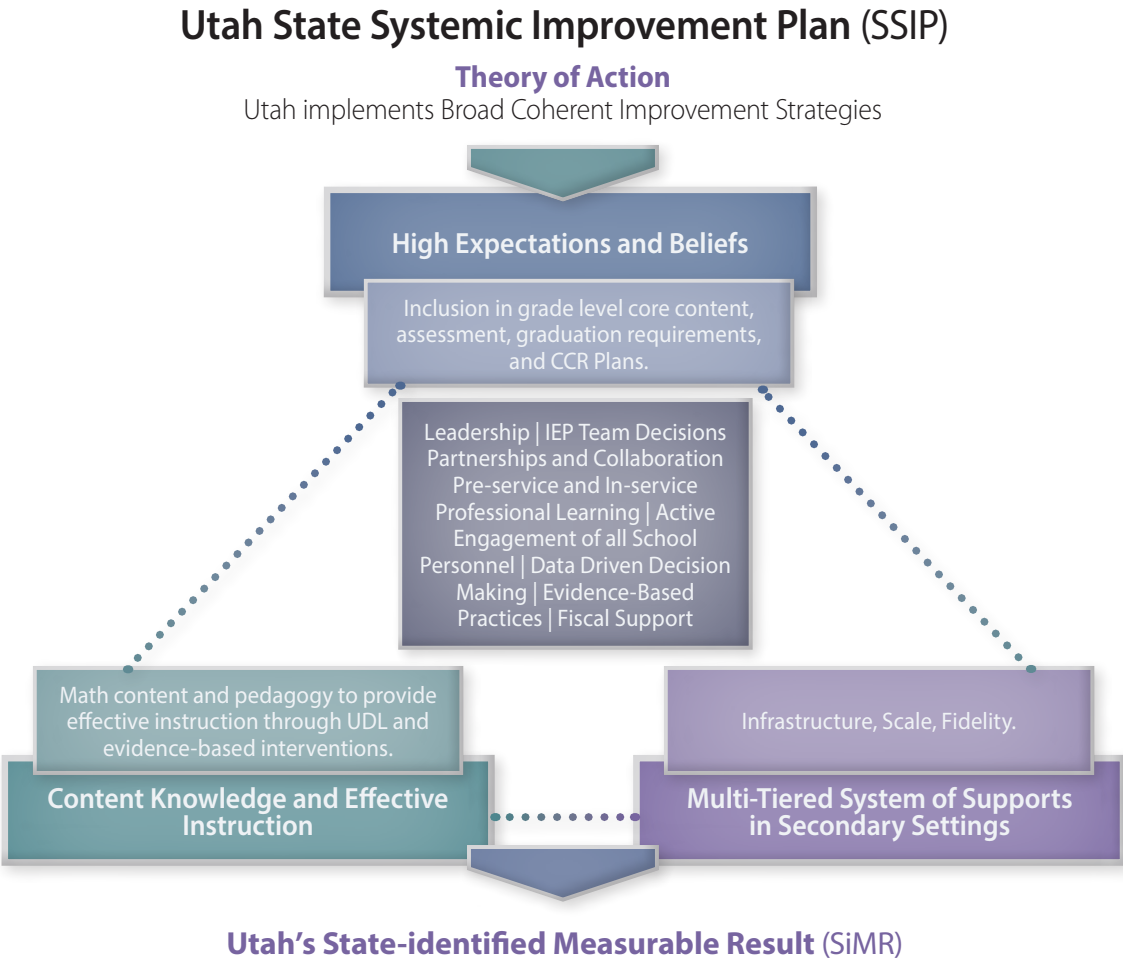
Theory of Action

Utah's Theory of Action is a brief but comprehensive representation of our long-term, transformative and sustainable plan to improve mathematics outcomes for students with disabilities.

Utah's Theory of Action begins with the identification of the three root cause concerns for the poor achievement of students with disabilities in mathematics in grades six through eight and transforms those concerns into our three Broad Coherent Improvement Strategies, including High Expectations and Beliefs; Content Knowledge and Effective Instruction, and Multi-Tiered System of Supports in Secondary Settings. The Theory of Action then demonstrates how each Broad Coherent Improvement Strategy will leverage the strengths of current USOE and LEA initiatives and priorities to build LEA capacity for improvement, while at the same time decreasing the impact of infrastructure gaps. Next, the Theory of Action clearly articulates Utah's SiMR.

The power of Utah's Theory of Action is that as stakeholders address all identified infrastructure analysis and data analysis gaps through the implementation of Utah's three Broad Coherent Improvement Strategies, the mathematics achievement of not just students with disabilities in grades six through eight, or just students with disabilities, but all students in Utah will improve.

Utah's Theory of Action will require the continued engagement of all stakeholders as we collaboratively address all supports and needs of LEAs, schools, teachers, and students.

Figure 14: Visual Representation of Utah's Theory of Action

Utah State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)

Theory of Action
Utah implements Broad Coherent Improvement Strategies

High Expectations and Beliefs

Inclusion in grade level core content, assessment, graduation requirements, and CCR Plans.

Leadership | IEP Team Decisions Partnerships and Collaboration Pre-service and In-service Professional Learning | Active Engagement of all School Personnel | Data Driven Decision Making | Evidence-Based Practices | Fiscal Support

Math content and pedagogy to provide effective instruction through UDL and evidence-based interventions.

Infrastructure, Scale, Fidelity.

Content Knowledge and Effective Instruction

Multi-Tiered System of Supports in Secondary Settings

Utah's State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR)
Utah will increase the percentage of students with Speech/Language Impairment (SLI) or Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) in grades 6–8 who are proficient on SAGE mathematics assessment by 11.11% over a five year period.

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